

R381-100- 19: CHILD DISCIPLINE

Purpose

This section provides rules and information about forms of discipline that may be used and forms of discipline that are not allowed.

General Information

The word “discipline” originates from a Latin root that implies learning and education. The modern dictionary defines discipline as “training that develops self-control, character, or orderliness and efficiency.” Unfortunately, common usage has corrupted the word so that many consider discipline synonymous with punishment, most particularly corporal punishment. *CFOC, 3rd Ed. pgs. 70-72 Standard 2.2.0.6*

Discipline is most effective when it is consistent, recognizes and reinforces desired behaviors, and offers natural consequences (for example, when a child breaks a toy, the toy no longer works) and logical consequences (for example, not being able to play in the sandbox for a period of time as a consequence for throwing sand) for negative behaviors. Research studies have found that corporal punishment has limited effectiveness and potentially harmful side effects. Time out should not be used with infants and toddlers because they are too young to cognitively understand this consequence. *CFOC, 3rd Ed. pgs. 70-72 Standard 2.2.0.6*

Discipline should be an ongoing process of teaching that helps children develop inner control so that they can manage their own behavior in a socially acceptable manner. Children must be given understandable guidelines for their behavior if they are to develop inner control of their actions. The aim of discipline is to develop personal self-discipline. *CFOC, 3rd Ed. pgs. 70-72 Standard 2.2.0.6*

Appropriate alternatives to corporal punishment vary as children grow and develop. As infants become more mobile, caregivers must create a safe space and impose limitations by encouraging activities that distract or redirect children from harmful situations. Brief verbal expressions of disapproval can help prepare older infants and toddlers for later use of reasoning. However, caregivers cannot expect infants and toddlers to be controlled by verbal reprimands. Preschoolers have begun to develop an understanding of rules and can be expected to understand natural and logical consequences and brief time out (out-of-group activity) as the result of undesirable behavior. School age children begin to develop a sense of personal responsibility and self-control, and will recognize the removal of privileges (such as the loss of participation in an activity). *CFOC, 3rd Ed. pgs. 75-76 Standard 2.2.0.9*

The prohibited methods of discipline are considered psychologically and emotionally abusive, and can easily become physically abusive as well. Research has linked corporal punishment with negative effects such as later criminal behavior and learning impairments. *CFOC, 3rd Ed. pgs. 75-76 Standard 2.2.0.9*

(1) The provider shall inform caregivers, parents, and children of the center's behavioral expectations for children.

Rationale / Explanation

The purpose of this rule is to ensure that all parties involved, including parents, children, and caregivers understand the center's behavioral expectations. Children cannot be expected to conform to behavioral expectations if they do not know what those expectations are. *CFOC, 3rd Ed. pgs. 70-72 Standard 21.2.0.6, pgs. 349-350 Standard 9.2.1.3*

Enforcement

Always Level 3 Noncompliance.

The provider may inform caregivers, parents, and children of the center's behavioral expectations in a variety of ways. Examples of this include making it part of the orientation information for new enrolling parents, putting it in a parent handbook, posting it in the center, and discussing it at parent meetings.

(2) The provider may discipline children using positive reinforcement, redirection, and by setting clear limits that promote children's ability to become self-disciplined.

(3) Caregivers may use gentle, passive restraint with children only when it is needed to stop children from injuring themselves or others or from destroying property.

Rationale / Explanation

Children in out of home care in the United States have been shown to demonstrate more aggressive behavior than children reared at home or children in child care facilities in other countries. Children mimic adult behavior: adults who demonstrate loud or violent behavior serve as models for children. Caregiver intervention when children behave aggressively protects children and encourages them to exhibit more acceptable behavior. *CFOC, 3rd Ed. pgs. 72-73 Standard 2.2.0.7*

When a child's behavior makes it necessary, for his or her own or others' protection, to restrain the child, the most desirable method of restraint is holding the child as gently as possible to accomplish the restraint. The child should not be physically restrained any longer than is necessary to control the situation. No bonds, ties, or straps should be used to restrain children. *CFOC, 3rd Ed. pg. 76 Standard 2.2.0.10*

(4) Discipline measures shall not include any of the following:

(a) any form of corporal punishment such as hitting, spanking, shaking, biting, pinching, or any other measure that produces physical pain or discomfort;

Enforcement

Always Level 1 Noncompliance.

Corporal punishment includes squirting a child with water or putting hot sauce or soap in a child's mouth.

(4) Discipline measures shall not include any of the following:

(b) restraining a child's movement by binding, tying, or any other form of restraint that exceeds that specified in Subsection (3) above.

Enforcement

Always Level 1 Noncompliance.

Placing a child in a harness or leash is considered restraining a child's movements.

Unless it is used as a form of discipline, swaddling a child will not be considered restraining a child's movement.

(4) Discipline measures shall not include any of the following:

(c) shouting at children;

Enforcement

Always Level 1 Noncompliance.

This rule is not intended to prevent a caregiver from shouting to a child in an emergency situation where there is a danger of imminent serious physical harm (for example, to prevent a child from running into the street).

(4) Discipline measures shall not include any of the following:

(d) any form of emotional abuse;

Enforcement

Always Level 1 Noncompliance.

A provider's use of profanity towards a child is considered emotional abuse and inappropriate discipline.

For the purposes of this rule, using humiliation to discipline a child, such as putting an older child in a highchair or crib, or putting an older child in a younger classroom, to make the child look like a "baby" is considered emotional abuse.

(4) Discipline measures shall not include any of the following:

(e) forcing or withholding of food, rest, or toileting; and,

Rationale / Explanation

When adults use food to modify behavior, children can come to view eating as a tug-of-war and are more likely to develop lasting food dislikes and unhealthy eating behaviors. CFOC, 3rd Ed. pgs. 70-72 Standard 2.2.0.6

Enforcement

Always Level 1 Noncompliance.

If a special treat or snack is withheld as a discipline measure, this rule will be considered out of compliance.

While best practice is not to use food as a reward for finishing the food offered, a finding will not be issued if the child is not offered dessert when they do not finish their meal.

(4) Discipline measures shall not include any of the following:

(f) confining a child in a closet, locked room, or other enclosure such as a box, cupboard, or cage.

Enforcement

Always Level 1 Noncompliance.

A child may not be put in an enclosure for time out purposes. This is considered confining a child.